

GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND DISCUSSIONINSPECTOR FULTZ, MR. LETT AND DR. ROUTH

Before The
POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS INSTITUTE
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

May 28, 1959

DR. FRENSE: Our procedure here will be to consider first the questions that have been prepared for us by your work groups. If in answering them the members of the panel seem to miss some point that you feel is important, feel free to press them further. However, I would appreciate it if you do not ask any questions until the proper time that are not related to the subjects under immediate discussion. The first question then is:

Q.1 COULD WE HAVE SOME DISCUSSION ON HOW THE POLICE CAN INITIATE THE IMPROVEMENT OF BETTER POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS? HOW ABOUT CITIZENS' ADVISORY GROUPS?

Lett: I would suggest that you have either a man or a bureau to handle press relations.

Fultz: In Houston we have all kinds of commissions; for urban development, zoos, etc. And we have a citizens' committee to help the police. This could be good and it is working well in Houston. However, such people as get on these committees tend to want to play police officer. Crime is glorified by lack of proper communication with the press. I personally think that the man on the beat is the best public relations officer you can get. He knows the facts and if he is properly trained he can help a lot.

Routh: Have a conference of Community leaders on this to get suggestions from

them on how to improve the public image of the police. There are already in existence many groups that could and would help.

Q.2 WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT?

Routh: They would include an increase of complaints from a district, of rising tensions (tho this is hard to measure) and even of crime incidence. The police should have outposts in the various areas of the city who can call in when they detect mounting trouble. The community relations agency can help in this for they are often geared to do this. The best thing is the man on the beat; he is closest. This is the quickest and easiest way. I'd also suggest your maintaining a pin map of the city using colors to show the things you want to keep track of.

Lett: The High Schools is frequently a good source of information; the students represent a wide sending area, they could report increasing incidents.

Routh: Yes, the principals and the school police could help there too.

Fultz: I think the policeman is best. Agencies might interpret the news wrongly.

Q.3 WILL YOU COMMENT ON HOW TO HANDLE INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL INTEGRATION PROCESS?

Fultz: In the South we are proud that we have had a minimum of crimes in this connection such as have been committed in the North. We have segregated police units serving segregated areas. This is best in the South now. But there is no doubt that a change will come in this too. And it will come when it does in an orderly fashion for we will have prepared -

the department and the public for it. We have made a start: one of our colored policemen has a white guard dog on the beat with him.

Lett: In the North I think part of our troubles rise from a basic fear of "another" threatening thing, another change for which we aren't ready. We must show that change IS coming and by showing why it must, show the illogic, of reresistance. We must not be arbitrary, but we must be logical in, for example, merit appointments.

Pace: In Detroit our use of both Negroes and whites in squad cars together is going OK now. We've concluded that the original trouble may have been from personality clashes rather than racial ones.

Routh: Make changes gradually under well publicized time goals.

Lett: In New Jersey we made a study of the public reaction to the use of Negroes in sales and hotel work. Interviewers would follow persons who had just bought something from a Negro clerk and ask him what he thought of having Negro clerks in the stores. "Oh," the person would say, "I'm against that " apparently unaware that one had just served him. Our minds and our hearts are not in step. Our American public is far more decent than its propagandists let it be.

Q.4 DISCUSS HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING IN DEEP SOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENTS?

Routh: We have the same training as for whites, and at all ranks. Some of the talks are by minority group people. We have special courses in intergroup relations conducted by near-by universities. This should be done in South and North.

Q-5 WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF NEGRO LEADERS IN THE COMMUNITY?

Lett: The community expects more from Negro leaders than they are ready to

deliver. THEY can't change, by themselves, the practices of all the employers in the community. They must have the help of everyone, and of the law. Training for Negro leaders should be available. We try to broaden their horizons so they can see the whole context of a problem. Remember, the Negro leader is as remote from Negro criminals as white leaders are from white criminals. We find that the leaders are very susceptible to training and help because they want to be helped, badly. Finally, we should be sure to contact the potential leadership and prepare it before trouble starts.

Q.6 WHAT CRITERIA SHOULD BE USED IN TRAINING THE POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING?

Fultz: Los Angeles is the model to copy in that for the whole nation. To professionalize, look at the other professions to see what they demand of themselves. Orient the community to what you are doing. Psychological tests are getting better for this sort of thing. Examine prospective recruits' backgrounds. Interview their wives and neighbors, as business executives do when they are filling key jobs. Discover the man's social attitudes. Probation periods of six months or a year can protect against making mistakes. What do you do in Los Angeles Chief White?

White: We choose men on the basis of a minimum IQ of 110. We have then interviewed not only professionally but by business men. Personnel people. They must pass in the highest grade only. We see their ex-wives too, and their mother-in law. And their co-workers. We don't

believe much in personnel records as a guide. Our psychologists agree that nothing is as valid as a man's past behavior.

Q-7 WHAT HAS BEEN THE REAL EFFECT OF INTEGRATION ON THE GRADES OF STUDENTS IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. SCHOOLS?

Fultz: It depends on what you read about it. Davis, in the South, claims that the survey he made shows a definite decrease in grades and an increase in delinquency. But we have investigated his investigation and find that he only interviewed people who would say what he wanted them to say. His survey was a fraud. A far better source is Dr. Hanson, Supt. of Schools whose study shows the exact opposite; that since the 4-track system was introduced there has been marked improvement in the general level of D.C. grades and a real decrease in delinquency.

Rauth: Knoll's study also agrees that there has been improvement. This report can be had free from the Southern Regional Council. Let me say while I have the floor that I think it is inevitable that all the schools will integrate. The courts have ordered it. And there is a common law corollary to the law of equity which says, "What you cannot do directly in equity, you cannot do indirectly". The evasive measures taken by the Southerners simply cannot stand up in court. It is only a matter of time. They have but two choices: either integrate the schools or close them, if publicly supported.

Q-8 HOW CAN THE AGENCIES STIMULATE IMPROVEMENT IN PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD POLICE?

Lett: First, there are two types of agencies. One is the service group like the social service agencies we heard about yesterday. The other

is the kind that we are concerned with in your question, such as human relations groups. This kind of thing is their job. Remember that all fairly large communities have three elements in them: the small dissident group to the left, the "minus" group who oppose any change; the small dissident group to the right who jump at any change, and the vast inert, apathetic group in the middle whom we have to get to work on. It's a big and an unending job.

Q-9 WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "SUSTAINED COHESIVENESS"?

Fultz: When a woman becomes a widow, the community rallies to her support and comes up, in a moment of sympathy, with some funds to help her. Then they forget her and her problems. "Sustained cohesiveness" describes groups that maintain interest in a cause.

Q-10 HOW DO YOU PREPARE A COMMUNITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE BEFORE THE EVENT?

Routh: Personal security is the important thing. Create this in the community and even in the police to give them the needed self-image that they can handle things.

Q-11 HOW CAN WE BEST USE OUR MANPOWER IN INTERGROUP SITUATIONS?

Routh: Keep working at it, experimenting. The answer will be different in each city.

Q-12 WHY DO MINORITY GROUPS HAVE A CHIP ON THEIR SHOULDERS? SPECIFICALLY, WHY DOES THE NAACP KEEP BLOWING UP SMALL INCIDENTS INTO LARGE ONES?

Lett: An old and basic principle is that the rebels use us. To gain their ends they use techniques that have been used, they think, on them. The Negro Press and the NAACP will disappear when they are no longer needed. They are the natural results of the need for them. Minority

group peoples develop defenses. NAACP makes many mistakes. But so does any group. In their case errors of judgment may result from poor backgrounds or from poor communication. They will accept any version that they think is responsible that will serve their purpose.

Face: The NAACP in our area reported 26 incidents of poor action on the part of our police that were all probably untrue. These hit the front pages, but when we gave the press the truth it landed in the back pages.
(Face then read a story from page 53 of the Detroit FREE PRESS (5/28/59) which illustrated his point.)

Lett: These are the facts of life. Any other agency has had the same experiences.

Q-13 ISN'T THE NORTH ASKING THE SOUTH TO DO IN A FEW YEARS WHAT THE NORTH ITSELF HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH?

Routh: No, I don't think so. It is not a matter of the North against the South; It is a national movement of the whole country against its parts. The country--all over--is coming to the conclusion that there must be no second class citizens here.

Lett: This again is an illustration of poor communication. The main thing is not what area is doing what area; it's simply a matter that the Negro wants the country to make a start. They cry out "When do we start."